





# *Chapter 5: Managing Transportation*

**N**antucket, the “faraway island,” has grown more accessible over the last 30 years, which is a major factor in its explosive growth. It is not so far away anymore, at least in terms of the time it takes to get here, and it is not as isolated as it was during its long slumber between the cosmopolitan days of the whaling era and the recent upsurge of the vacation economy. The combination of air service, fast ferries, and modern communication systems (faxes, Internet, and cellular phones) has made Nantucket more accessible, with far-reaching implications for our future, both good and bad.

As the island becomes more accessible and increasing numbers of people come through our air and sea gateways, concern grows over the corresponding crowding and traffic congestion. Yet there is also an opportunity. What ultimately determines traffic congestion is how many cars are here and how often and where they are used. Visitors arriving on fast ferries and in airplanes are not bringing cars with them, but many vacation-home owners and seasonal residents own cars that stay on-island. As the number of cars garaged on Nantucket increases, keeping visitors and residents out of those cars becomes more of a challenge. To reduce the impact of traffic congestion on our quality of life, we must continue our efforts to restore Nantucket to a place where life without a car is possible, pleasurable, and convenient.

*MOTOR VEHICLES ARE EXCLUDED FROM THIS STREET. In the early days of automobiles on Nantucket, it was much easier to manage transportation challenges, as seen in this photo taken in 1913 of Selectmen Orison Hull and Joseph Terry posting a sign at the corner of Federal and Broad Streets in front of the current Mooney Building (Town Hall Annex).*

Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association



Our great challenge over the next ten years is to better coordinate our decision making about transportation and to get vacationers and islanders out of their cars as much as possible. But Americans love their cars, especially when they are on vacation. Nantucket's open countryside and accessible beaches entice people to use cars to reach those attractive places. So it is no easy thing to persuade people to leave behind what in most mainland communities is an absolute necessity. Similarly, as development has proliferated across the island, Nantucketers increasingly need their cars to get to work, to school, to recreation, and to do their daily errands.

Nantucket has already done a great deal to offer convenient alternative ways to get around in the peak season. Our transit system, the NRTA shuttle, has shown phenomenal increases in ridership during its short life. Each of those riders might otherwise be in a car, contributing to our traffic problem. Our extensive bikepath system also draws people out of their vehicles, but it functions best outside of the downtown and mid-island areas.

What often goes unrecognized in the debate over cars and traffic congestion is how the pattern of settlement itself can create or solve traffic problems. People living in houses that are remote from stores and a town center depend upon cars for meeting both their daily needs and to get to the places they want to enjoy while they are on vacation.

The same sprawl pattern of development that has been devouring our countryside and

obliterating the line between Town and Country plays a major role in aggravating our traffic problems. Thus, the Community Plan's growth management strategy of guiding development toward existing developed areas and discouraging it in outlying areas is an

***"We need to look at the total combined impacts of all of our interrelated decisions about air and ferry access, road improvements, public transportation, automobile usage, parking, bikepaths, sidewalks, and growth management (including zoning and preservation of open land)."***

integral part of addressing our traffic problem. A well-developed neighborhood that can support the use of public transit is the best way to reduce car dependency.

Another way to address traffic prob-

lems is to encourage residents and visitors to make the distinction between necessary and convenient car trips. There are occasions when going to work, going to the beach, and going downtown to visit friends, boutiques, and restaurants can be done without a car. On the other hand, the weekly grocery run, the occasional trip to the lumberyard, and the exploration of remote parts of the island usually does require the use of a car. Our willingness to change our driving habits should be in proportion to our concern about growing gridlock and road rage.

In addition to car traffic, truck traffic poses major challenges to our quality of life. Large trucks do not function well on our narrow streets. When they make deliveries, they tie up traffic even more. Trucks that are designed for mainland highways and shopping centers do not belong on Nantucket, and they worsen existing problems caused by having too many cars.

These are the challenges we face: How do we



address the volume of vehicles and passengers coming through our gateways and the numbers of vehicles being permanently deposited on the island so that their impacts are minimized? How do we create an effective twenty-first century transportation system while maintaining a road network that was largely built before automobiles became the nation's dominant mode of travel? As many European cities and towns have shown, it can be done, but it will take decisive action to make it

work. And making it work is vital if we are to preserve and enhance the special character of Nantucket.

In order to meet this challenge, we need to look at the total combined impacts of all of our interrelated decisions about air and ferry access, road improvements, public transportation, automobile usage, parking, bikepaths, sidewalks, and growth management (including zoning and preservation of open land).



Rob Benchley

*A typical summer's day wait to get on the Nantucket-bound ferry in Hyannis.*



Rob Benchley

## ***The Island Today***

Between 1990 and 1999 the number of passengers traveling to Nantucket by sea and air grew from 515,604 to 779,330, an increase of 51 percent. During the same period, the percentage of people arriving by air increased 133 percent. Thus, the percentage of passengers coming by air has been increasing more than 2½ times faster than total travelers. The relative affordability of air travel and the trend of leaving vehicles for use on the island has accounted for a dramatic shift in the preference for air travel.

Access to the island is currently in the hands

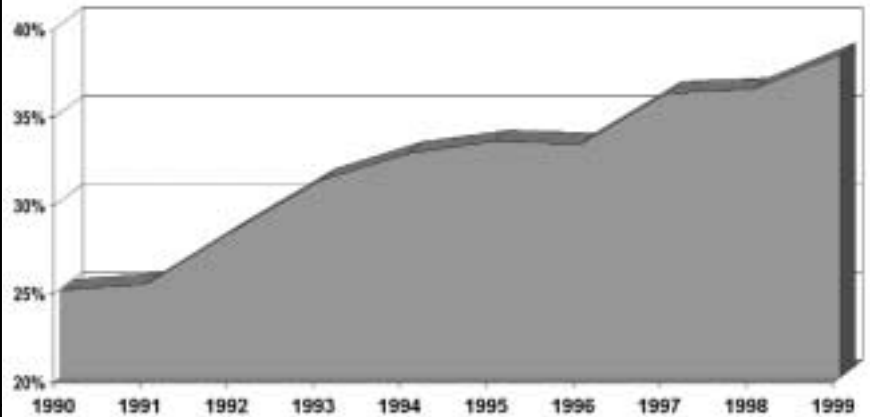
*The Steamship Authority's Eagle leaves Steamboat Wharf in Nantucket Harbor. In season, the Steamship Authority makes six round trips per day carrying passengers and vehicles.*

of several different entities that do not coordinate their actions. The Steamship Authority is responsible for both providing ferry service and licensing private carriers. The number of people arriving and departing on smaller private boats is increasing. Nantucket's airport, the second busiest in New England, has seen a huge increase in air traffic, both from scheduled commercial service and private airplanes. There is no system for coordinating all passenger arrivals or for coordinating arrivals with on-island transportation services.

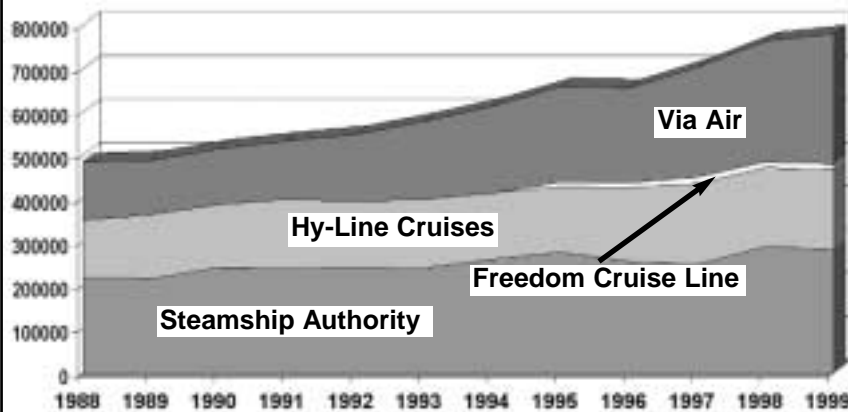


*From 1990 to 1999, the number of passengers traveling to Nantucket has increased 51%. The number of those traveling by air increased 133% and represents a steadily increasing percentage of overall travel.*

**Percentage of Passengers Traveling by Air**

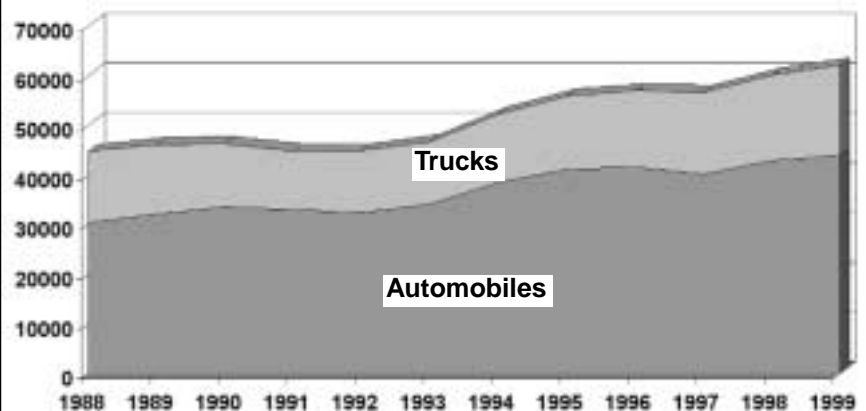


**Total Passengers Traveling to Nantucket 1988-1999**



*For the same period, the total number of vehicle arrivals has increased approximately 34%.*

**Total Vehicle Arrivals 1988-1999**



Source: Nantucket Airport Commission, Steamship Authority, Hy-Line Cruises, Freedom Cruise Line, NP&EDC



As access to Nantucket has grown easier and more convenient, we see major impacts on our way of life. The most obvious is the crowding of our streets with both vehicles and pedestrians. Less obvious is the change in our workforce, as more and more of the island's employees commute by fast ferry or air. With the cost of housing skyrocketing, wages rising to keep up with housing costs, and transportation access becoming more convenient, it has become possible for more island employees to live on the mainland and work on Nantucket. This has significant social and economic implications, as our middle-class workforce is transformed from full-fledged residents with a stake in the community to day laborers who come and go.

Increased access to Nantucket is also changing the character of both the visitor and resident populations. It is now easier than before for day-trippers to come here. Some vacationers, who in the past might have been deterred by the time it took to get to Nantucket, are now more likely to come. And people who retire or have businesses with strong mainland connections can more easily go back and forth, thus leading more of them to move here permanently.

The net result of improvements in access to the island is to greatly increase growth pressure as more and more people seek to visit or live here. With that growth pressure comes the threat of destruction of the fragile qualities that make our island special—and the need to plan for, limit, and manage our growth. An essential part of the planning and growth-management process necessarily involves managing and controlling access to Nantucket, while preserving the critical and necessary access to the mainland that our year-round residents require.

### *Our Goals*

- ◆ To provide residents and visitors with adequate, efficient, affordable, and dependable transportation between Nantucket and the mainland.
- ◆ To acknowledge and plan for the limitations of the island to accommodate vehicles and people.

### *Strategies for the Future*

We need to limit and manage access to Nantucket and better integrate our planning for all modes of transportation. The goal of such integration is to limit the number of cars on the island and to control arrivals sufficiently to keep peak-season population and traffic at a manageable level.

This means that Nantucket should do everything legally possible to limit vehicle arrivals and manage air traffic. The Steamship Authority is the source of all vehicle arrivals, and was established to serve the needs of the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. It should therefore be a high priority to encourage the Authority not to increase its capacity to ship vehicles. Controlling air traffic is more difficult, because the airplane traffic is heavily regulated at the state and federal levels.

The challenge for the Town of Nantucket and the Nantucket Airport Commission, which is also chartered to serve the people of Nantucket, is to find ways within its legal limitations to keep air traffic at levels that do not harm the island, its quality of life and its attractiveness. This Community Plan recommends a special partnership of transportation providers to address these difficult issues and





to coordinate island-wide the assessment of transportation-related impacts, including the impacts of planned expansions for airport growth and capacity.

Whatever the number of visitors arriving by air or sea, the impact of visitors depends to a great extent on what they do once they arrive. Large numbers of people disembarking all at once from ferries cause congestion problems. Large numbers of people arriving by plane, if they all ultimately drive cars, have a far more significant impact than if they walk, bicycle, or ride the NRTA shuttle. If people arrived at the airport on a limited number of larger planes, took the NRTA or taxis to their destinations, and did not use cars, there would be less impact from both air traffic and road traffic. It is as vital to provide good public transit to and from the ferry and airport as it is to limit the impact of visitors once they arrive at their homes or hotels.

The number of peak-season visitors is constrained to a large extent by the capacity of the island to accommodate them overnight. This is based on one aspect of the island's "holding capacity," i.e., its vacation-rental and hotel facilities. Passenger carriers, both by air and sea, tend to see themselves as responding to "demand" for travel. With the exception of day-trippers—the number of which is growing as fast access grows—the number of people who can come here is limited primarily by the island's holding capacity. Efforts to try to control the number of people

traveling on the ferries or on airplanes should be complemented by limiting the island's holding capacity through growth limitations as described in chapter 1, "Guiding Growth" (pages 46-49).

In addition to controlling the number of arriving passengers, we need to find a way to move baggage directly from arriving planes and boats to the ultimate destinations of vacationers. In that way, visitors can get to where they are staying without having to bring a car, rent a car, or take a taxi to get their baggage to its destination. Once they arrive, they can take advantage of the NRTA, bicycles, private vans, and other ways of seeing Nantucket. Eventually, a "seamless linkage" should be established so that visitors could put their bags on a train, plane, or bus they board in or around Boston, New York, or Providence and not have to worry about them again until they arrive at their hotel room or cottage, where the bags would be delivered.



Rob Benchley

*Since the Town of Nantucket owns the airport, planning for airport growth and capacity demands should be consistent with all other planning objectives.*





# Making It Happen: Arrivals and Departures

*The objectives and recommendations listed below are not intended as mandates to the Town of Nantucket, or to any other person, agency, organization, or public or quasi-public entity.*

## Objective 5.1

*To integrate the planning of all modes of transport to, from, and on the island.*

### Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Create an advisory entity to monitor, and make recommendations on, the transport of people, vehicles, and goods to the island. Such recommendations and monitoring are for the purpose of encouraging a coordinated, affordable, and efficient public and private transportation network, in the context of the island's carrying capacity and community character.
2. SHORT TERM: Encourage limitations based on the findings of the Traffic Congestion Plan Work Group appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Consider submitting a Home Rule Petition to Town Meeting and changes, if necessary, to the state legislature, to implement certain of those objectives.

## Objective 5.2

*To encourage the creation of, and aggressively market, an efficient and coordinated system of largely non-automobile-dependent transportation modes, from point-of-departure to point-of-arrival for the purpose of reducing the numbers of automobiles both on-island and at mainland ports.*

### Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Encourage the provision of transportation that is an alternative to the automobile by seeking the adjustment and coordination of schedules, routes, and connections and by encouraging joint ticketing in consultation with all providers of alternative modes of transportation to and from the island. These would include, but not be limited to, airlines, buses, trains/light rail, transit authorities, the Steamship Authority, private passenger boat carriers, and taxis.
2. SHORT TERM: Encourage the development of a multimedia marketing strategy in cooperation with other regions and public and private carriers to promote seamless travel that relies on alternatives to the automobile.



Rob Benchley

*An efficient baggage-handling system is just one link in the point-of-departure to point-of-arrival system proposed for visitors by the Community Plan.*

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),

SHORT-TERM (will begin within five years of plan adoption), LONG-TERM (will begin more than five years after plan adoption)



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### **Objective 5.3**

*To encourage coordination of transportation planning efforts in Southeastern Massachusetts to promote a more effectively coordinated alternative transportation system and to seek mitigation of the off-island impacts of Nantucket's seasonal visitors.*

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Encourage the NP&EDC to negotiate a memorandum of understanding (MOU) among the four regional planning agencies in Southeastern Massachusetts providing for those agencies to consult one another on transportation issues and to promote an integrated and seamless transportation system that addresses interregional traffic congestion.
2. SHORT TERM: Study the effects and possible mitigation of island-bound traffic and parking on Barnstable and Hyannis in cooperation with the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority, the Cape Cod Commission, the Steamship Authority, and the Town of Barnstable.
3. SHORT TERM: Explore the feasibility of a "for hire" shuttle van originating in Hyannis to provide "seamless" passage for visitors and their paraphernalia to

and from their island destinations, including passage on the ferry, and to individual residences. Consider the legality of the Town of Nantucket's involvement in promoting this endeavor.

### **Objective 5.4**

*To provide an efficient and convenient water-transportation system that connects mainland ports with Nantucket Harbor.*

#### **Objective 5.4.1**

*To study the legality and feasibility of establishing a definitive limit on the numbers of automobiles and the numbers of commercial vehicles transported to the island, while providing accessibility, convenience, and affordability of service to the island community and while adequately supporting the island's economic viability.*

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Consider the legality and feasibility of negotiating a binding agreement that caps the number of automobiles and commercial vehicles transported to the island, based on the analysis of carrying capacity by the Traffic Congestion Plan Work Group. Seek enabling legislation, if needed.
2. SHORT TERM: Advocate that any agreement limiting motor vehicles contains ample guarantees that convenient and unimpaired access by water

to and from the mainland, including affordable fares, is provided to Nantucket residents at all times of year.

3. SHORT TERM: Advocate that any agreement limiting commercial vehicles provides unimpaired delivery of freight essential to the basic economic well-being of the island.



Rob Benchley

*The plan encourages unimpaired delivery of goods essential to the well-being of the island.*

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),

SHORT-TERM (will begin within five years of plan adoption), LONG-TERM (will begin more than five years after plan adoption)



# **M**aking It Happen: Arrivals and Departures (continued)

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## **Objective 5.4.2**

*To consider the legality and feasibility of coordinating with the Steamship Authority the seasonal vehicle permit system described in Objective 5.8, Recommendation 1 (page 120).*

### **Recommendation:**

1. SHORT TERM: Urge the Steamship Authority to establish a program for educating drivers concerning the requirements of a seasonal vehicle permit system in an effort to minimize transport to the island of automobiles without seasonal permits.



*In connection with a seasonal automobile permit system, the Community Plan seeks to coordinate the enforcement of this system with the Steamship Authority.*

## **Objective 5.4.3**

*To encourage the coordination of land-side services at time of ferry arrivals.*

### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Study the ways and means of encouraging smooth transitions between the ferries and Nantucket destinations, while reducing the secondary impacts of ferry service on the downtown area.
2. SHORT TERM: Urge all ferry services to provide destination facilities with the number of walk-on passengers, so that an appropriate number of shuttles, taxis, and bicycles are available on arrival.
3. SHORT TERM: Consider the feasibility of reinstituting a dolly-freight system to transport baggage and vacation paraphernalia to and from Nantucket as a means of reducing dependency on the automobile to transport such goods.

## **Objective 5.4.4**

*To encourage the provision of freight service to the island that is dependable, affordable, and meets the economic needs of the island, while considering the land-side effects of scheduling, vehicle size, and trip frequency.*

### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Encourage the Steamship Authority to study the feasibility of allowing freight deliveries arriving in Nantucket out of the port of Hyannis or other ports to be made so as not to coincide with peak traffic periods. (see Objective 5.13, page 129)
2. SHORT TERM: Encourage the Steamship Authority to participate in a feasibility study of the establishment of a mainland facility to "break bulk," allowing the transfer of freight from larger to smaller trucks.

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),

SHORT-TERM (will begin within five years of plan adoption), LONG-TERM (will begin more than five years after plan adoption)



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### **Objective 5.5**

*To provide for safe and convenient access to the island through its second port of entry, Nantucket Memorial Airport, while considering the island's environmental and historical limitations and to establish limitations on air traffic and airport infrastructure to the extent provided by law.*

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Strive to negotiate a voluntary agreement between the Airport Commission, its private carriers, and with the Town of Nantucket that considers limitations on growth in air traffic to the extent allowed by law, and within limitations on island carrying capacity as determined by the Traffic Congestion Plan Work Group. Such agreement should also consider infrastructure needs in keeping with those limitations and should encourage an Airport Commission policy to make such improvements in keeping with those limitations.
2. SHORT TERM: Suggest to the Airport Commission that it consider the legality of establishing hours of operation for the airport, including its closing during night hours, as other airports have done, thereby eliminating airplane noise islandwide for that period.
3. SHORT TERM: To the extent not preempted by state or federal authority, include strict limitation of airport parking whenever considering expansion of the airport terminal, while requiring the expansion of alternative transportation modes servicing the airport, to reduce auto-dependency.

Rob Benchley



*The Community Plan proposes negotiating a voluntary agreement with the Airport Commission to limit air traffic to the extent permitted by law.*

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),

SHORT-TERM (will begin within five years of plan adoption), LONG-TERM (will begin more than five years after plan adoption)

### **Objective 5.6**

*To consider any increase in the capacity of any public or private transportation system transporting people, vehicles, or goods to or from the island in the context of islandwide environmental and historical limitations.*

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Encourage any entity planning to increase transportation capacity to prepare a Transportation Impact Statement (TIS). The NP&EDC's role would be to review and make recommendations on a TIS in connection with any passenger or vehicular increases or rate increases, or any related infrastructure improvements as they relate to capacity.
2. SHORT TERM: Advocate that any TIS prepared by a proponent of capacity expansions should demonstrate that increases in passenger or vehicular capacity or fares are proposed taking into consideration the collective capacities of all providers of transportation to and from the island. It is recommended that the impact analysis include the secondary, or "spill-over," impacts of those proposals on island infrastructure, particularly at its "choke points."



Rob Benchley

## *On-Island Travel*

### ***The Island Today***

Simply put, Nantucket in peak season has too many cars, many oversized, for its road system. And we use our cars more than our counterparts on the mainland. The transportation study done in connection with this Community Plan shows that Nantucketers (both visitors and year-round residents) make significantly more car trips each day than residents of mainland suburbs. This occurs primarily in the mid-island and rural parts of Nantucket rather than downtown, where most daily needs can be met on foot or with only occasional trips to mid-island shopping areas.

*The NRTA system has done more toward limiting traffic on Nantucket in season than any other effort to date.*

By mainland standards, our road network, with its narrow streets, is antiquated. But that is part of what makes this a special and enchanting place. We have a choice: we can upgrade our road system (by widening roads, adding lanes, putting in traffic lights) so that it functions more like Hyannis or suburban Boston, or we can keep it largely intact. Nantucket's clear choice is and has always been to keep our historic road system largely unchanged. That means that certain parts of the road system will continue to be stressed beyond their capacity unless we take other measures to prevent choking on the traffic we attract.



Historically, Nantucket's pattern of concentrated settlement and open countryside made the use of cars less necessary for visitors and residents alike. Most visitors stayed in town, in Siasconset, or in beachside cottages. Most year-round residents lived within walking distance of the harbor. The more recent growth of large-lot suburban neighborhoods and automobile-oriented shopping strips has played a major role in creating our traffic problems.

Given current travel behavior and the growth potential under current zoning, Nantucket's traffic congestion will become intolerable, especially in the mid-island area. It is therefore essential that we find ways to limit growth and change the way we move around this fragile island.

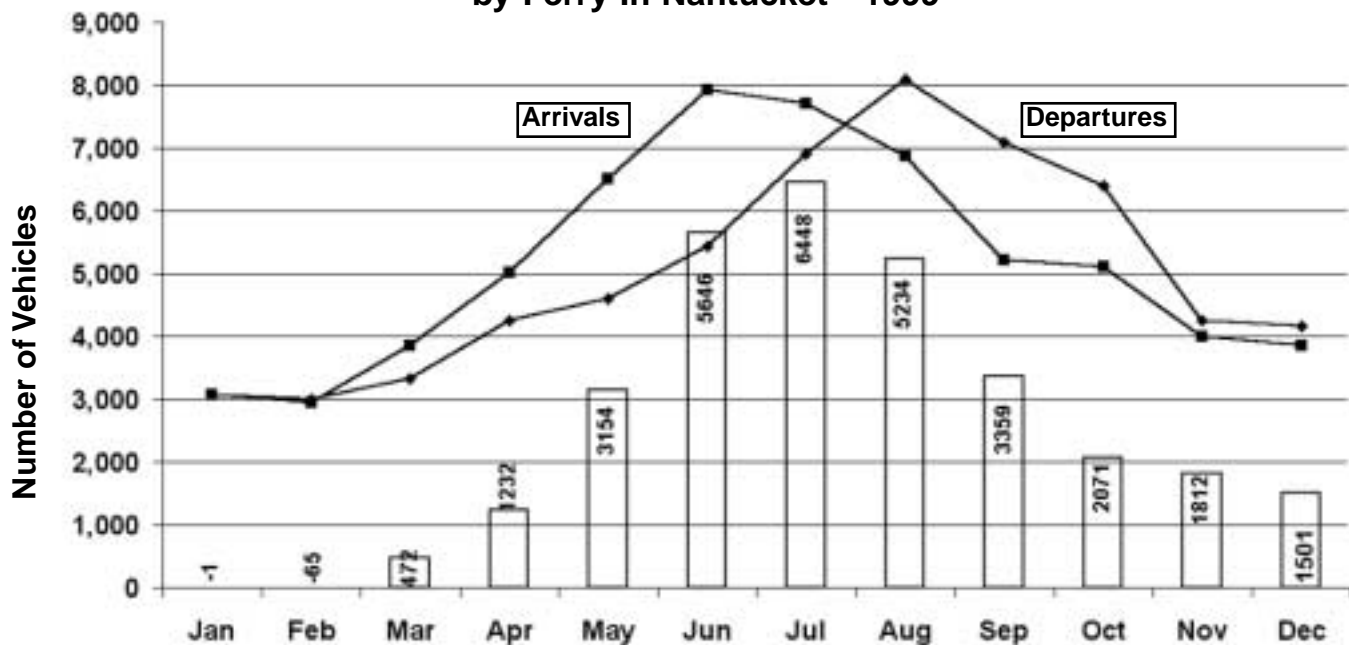
## Our Goal

- ◆ To establish an integrated transportation system to relieve traffic congestion, particularly during peak periods, to reduce dependency on the automobile, and to preserve the historic pattern and form of Nantucket's street and pedestrian systems.

## Strategies for the Future

Nantucket has tried in various ways to discourage visitors from bringing cars, with only limited success. This is largely because so many vacation homes are not served by convenient public transportation, and the

**Running Net Accumulation of Vehicles  
by Ferry In Nantucket—1999**



*Bar graph numbers show the accumulation of vehicles year to date for each month.*

Source: Steamship Authority

*Steamship Authority records of monthly arrivals and departures of vehicles show the running accumulation of vehicles on the island above the level garaged at the beginning of this year. In 1999, the peak accumulation of 6,448 vehicles was calculated at the end of July. At the end of the year, 1,501 more vehicles had arrived than had departed.*



alternatives to private cars are still inadequate. If Nantucket became known as the place “to leave your cares and your cars behind,” it would attract the kinds of visitors who would enjoy being in a remote place where a car is an unnecessary burden. This means changing Nantucket’s image in the popular imagination, doing more to discourage the use of private cars, and providing better alternatives.

If we achieve the goals stated elsewhere in the plan of redesigning our neighborhoods so that they are more in keeping with the traditional character of Nantucket, we can expect to see benefits in the form of reduced traffic congestion. This redesign would include installing more sidewalks and bikepaths, interconnecting our streets rather than building cul-de-sacs, allowing neighborhood stores, and supplying convenient and pleasant NRTA shuttle stops, so that more daily errands could be done on foot, by bicycle, or using public transit.

A basic assumption of this plan is that future road-system improvements will be minimal. Increasing the capacity of the road system will only encourage more people to drive, which will in turn create worse traffic jams at existing choke points. This “minimal road improvement” strategy has profound implications for our land-use decisions. It necessitates limiting the total buildout of the island and concentrating development in areas where it will have the least traffic impact. While scattered development in remote parts of the island may appear to have little traffic impact in its immediate neighborhood, the cumulative impact of those developments (which require their residents to drive everywhere) is to cause major problems at locations where traffic converges, such as at the Rotary and downtown.

In addition to changing the mainland-style settlement pattern that is built into our current zoning, a number of other measures can be taken to mitigate traffic problems. They include:

1. **Improving NRTA shuttle service.** If waiting time for the bus is reduced to only five or ten minutes, many more people will use it. The bus should also provide service to the airport and the ferry terminals. If increase in air traffic or enlargement of the airport is ever allowed, it should not occur unless the NRTA shuttle offers frequent and reliable service from the airport to downtown and elsewhere on the island. Another way the NRTA could attract more riders is by providing shelters in the downtown and mid-island areas. One or two “shuttle centers” with amenities such as rest rooms and bike racks catering to NRTA patrons could also be provided in those areas. The existing NRTA employer-incentive program should be continued and expanded. The Zoning Bylaw could be changed to require, as a condition of approval of new commercial projects, that employers purchase NRTA passes for all employees.
2. **Delivery services.** The experience of shopping “the Nantucket way” could involve selecting and purchasing merchandise at a store and then having it delivered (as usually happens with large appliances). Shopping could be done easily and pleasantly on foot, bicycle, or public transit if the merchandise does not need to be carried back.
3. **Taxi service.** Taxi operators have resisted expansion of the NRTA to the airport, viewing it as a threat to their livelihoods. That is a valid concern as long as the island is dominated by private cars, and





Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association

*An early "NRTA" ca. 1940 brings visitors to Surfside Beach.*

airport transportation represents a substantial proportion of taxi trips. However, if most visitors came here without a car, there would be far more business for taxis than there is now, filling in the gaps in NRTA service and catering to the desires of visitors who want transportation "on demand." Central dispatching of taxis would make the system operate more efficiently, enabling taxi drivers to use their time more productively.

4. **Bicycle facilities.** The bikepath system could be improved by providing additional paths in appropriate locations (where they would not cause damage to the moorlands or other sensitive areas), interconnecting the existing paths, and finding ways to route bicycles safely through the downtown and mid-island areas. In addition, benches, shelters in town, and bike racks should be provided at strategic locations.
5. **Limiting cars.** A permit system for limiting the number of cars that can be operated on Nantucket should be considered to control vehicle usage. Permits for visitors would have to be obtained along with ferry reservations, or from a Town of Nantucket office for vacationers who leave their cars on-island. Year-round residents would also be

covered by the system, but they would be given preferential treatment so that it did not compromise their ability to make a living.

6. **Controlling trucks.** Nantucket would be better served by trucks scaled to the size of our streets. Ideally, shippers would "break bulk" by transferring freight from large trucks to smaller ones before boarding ferries. (This would best be done in an off-Cape mainland location.) Deliveries could then occur with much less disruption and less damage to our roads. Ideally, freight would be unloaded at a different terminal where trucks not headed downtown could be routed around the downtown area.

7. **Managing growth.** As described in chapter 1, reducing the island's total buildout and concentrating development in settlement centers that have stores, offices, sidewalks, bikepaths, and NRTA shuttle service will go a long way toward reducing traffic congestion. If fewer visitors stay in large homes in suburban-style developments, and more stay in hotels and inns, they will not need to bring as many cars.

The combination of managing growth, developing alternative forms of transportation, and adopting a minimal road-improvement strategy can go a long way toward reducing the number of cars on Nantucket roads.

We can also save a lot of money by avoiding any changes, such as road widening or additional parking areas downtown, that encourage using cars—money that can then be used to further expand alternative transportation options and to encourage people to use them. The more we do to make people want to leave their cars behind, the further we will go toward preserving the special character of Nantucket.



# Making It Happen: On-Island Travel

*The objectives and recommendations listed below are not intended as mandates to the Town of Nantucket, or to any other person, agency, organization, or public or quasi-public entity.*

## Objective 5.7

*To adopt transportation policies and regulations in keeping with Nantucket's historic character and the capacities and limitations of its infrastructure.*

### Objective 5.7.1

*To consider the legality and feasibility of limiting the expansion of transportation infrastructure.*

#### Recommendations:

1. IMMEDIATE: Seek enabling legislation, if needed, and amend the Town Code to reflect standards that require that no road on Nantucket shall exceed two lanes of travel.
2. IMMEDIATE: Seek enabling legislation, if needed, and amend the Town Code to reflect standards that require that except where reconstructing an existing intersection containing turn lanes or diverters, no turning lanes or traffic diverters be constructed on the island.
3. IMMEDIATE: Seek enabling legislation, if needed, and amend the Town Code to reflect standards that require that all neighborhood "living" roads be designed and maintained to promote motor vehicle speeds of not more than 20 MPH (especially in Nantucket town and in Siasconset).
4. IMMEDIATE: Seek enabling legislation, if needed, and amend the Town Code to reflect standards that require that no mechanized traffic signals be utilized to control traffic flows on the island.

## Objective 5.7.2

*To create infrastructure consistent with the Town and Country concept.*

#### Recommendations:

1. IMMEDIATE: Amend the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land to encourage the interconnection of existing and proposed streets in keeping with the island's traditional pattern of blocks and interconnected streets.
2. IMMEDIATE: Amend the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land to disallow cul-de-sacs, but allow waivers on a case-by-case basis where unique circumstances (i.e., environmental limitations, etc.) preclude interconnections.
3. SHORT TERM: Adopt and implement a policy concerning the improvement and maintenance of roads consistent with the Town and Country concept and, in general, with this Community Plan.
4. SHORT TERM: Amend the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land to provide that new streets are appropriately designed for lower motor vehicle speeds and strategically placed to provide missing connections and block-size reductions.
5. SHORT TERM: Consult with neighborhood and civic associations concerning possible interconnections between existing streets through creating Neighborhood Area Plans.
6. SHORT TERM: Investigate, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Highway Department, the ramifications of the state's granting to the Town of Nantucket control and maintenance

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),

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responsibility for Milestone Road. The Town of Nantucket would thus gain control over the character of "improvements" the state could potentially make while exploring the effect of the action on the Town of Nantucket's eligibility for future state and federal funding.

### Objective 5.7.3

***To establish Nantucket-specific standards for automobile and road capacity that are based primarily on the island's historic character not on conventional capacity standards.***

#### Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Consider the legality and feasibility of amending the Zoning Bylaw and the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land so that decisions on specific new or expanded projects do not hinge on mainland standards that encourage growth of capacity through roadway improvements. Standards for new or expanded projects would be based on queue length, vehicle trips per peak hour, and vehicle trips per day, with capacities established in keeping with the character of the island. Seek enabling legislation, if needed.
2. SHORT TERM: Consider the legality and feasibility of adopting as Town of Nantucket policy and amending the Zoning Bylaw and the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land to establish level of service (LOS) limitations for intersections (the delay that one might experience at an intersection due to congestion) as defined in the *Highway Capacity Manual* from the Transportation Research Board, and as recommended by consultant Rick Chellman in his technical report titled *Transportation Element of the Nantucket Comprehensive Plan*. Seek enabling legislation, if needed.

feasibility of establishing "quantitative zoning" (i.e., the use of performance measures, such as traffic generation, as a basis for establishing limitations on development). These limitations might "float"; that is, they would be applied case-by-case, based on circumstances unique to the area where the development occurs. Seek enabling legislation, if needed.

4. SHORT TERM: Amend the Zoning Bylaw to:
  - a. Establish maximum criteria for the number of parking spaces for mixed-use development mid-island and in neighborhoods and implementing a Special Permit process to evaluate the need to exceed those standards on a case-by-case basis.
  - b. Allow shared parking.
5. SHORT TERM: Use existing parking areas strategically selected to facilitate the use of alternative modes of transportation.
6. SHORT TERM: Consider reclassifying streets as "living," "mixed," and "traffic," as defined in the technical report *Transportation Element of the Nantucket Comprehensive Plan* by Rick Chellman, and developing appropriate standards for each category in the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land.



Rob Benchley

*Among other standards, the Community Plan recommends setting limits on unacceptable delays at the island's most congested intersections.*

3. SHORT TERM: Study the legality and

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# Making It Happen: On-Island Travel

(continued)

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## Objective 5.7.4

*To regulate the speed of automobile travel by establishing speed limits appropriate to pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods, and by implementing traffic-calming techniques that are in keeping with island character.*

### Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Take the steps required to prepare appropriate engineering reports to qualify for permission from the Massachusetts Highway Department, in accordance with Chapter 90, Section 18, of the Massachusetts General Laws, to establish a speed limit of 20 MPH for "living" priority streets (for Nantucket and Siasconset Old Historic Districts and existing neighborhoods).
2. SHORT TERM: Institute a variety of traffic-calming measures to slow the speed of traffic and creating more pedestrian-friendly streets. Particularly in the mid-island area, those measures might:

- convert two-way streets to single-lane, one-way streets
- add on-street parking
- create "bump-outs" at major pedestrian crossings to shorten crossing distances
- reduce street pavement width to add sidewalk and bikepath capacity
- create "islands" in collector roads to force slowing of traffic at major pedestrian crossings

## Objective 5.8

*To reduce the numbers of private motor vehicles in use on the island, particularly during peak periods.*

### Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Consider the legality of regulating the numbers of vehicles on-island during the peak season by instituting a Town of Nantucket-administered seasonal permit requirement for all vehicles used for personal purposes, as might be recommended by the Traffic Congestion Plan Work Group. The bylaw should provide that vehicles used by year-round residents be grandfathered.
2. SHORT TERM: Establish a plan to manage vehicular access and vehicular use of the shoreline to provide for traditional vehicular access rights to the Town of Nantucket's beaches, while considering restricting the numbers of vehicles that access the shoreline, especially off-road rental vehicles.
3. SHORT TERM: Consider the legality of further regulating moped use on the island.



Mary Novissimo

*This traffic-calming technique in Wauwinet is in keeping with island character.*

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### **Objective 5.9**

*To reduce the volume of future automobile traffic by altering land-use patterns in keeping with the Town and Country concept.*

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Amend the Zoning Bylaw and the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land to alter land-use patterns in accordance with the Town and Country concept as described in chapter 1, "Guiding Growth" (pages 29-41).
2. SHORT TERM: Consider the legality and feasibility of amending the Zoning Bylaw and the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land to require new development to undergo a trafficshed analysis based on trafficshed capacity and limitations, particularly in the Country Overlay District. Seek enabling legislation, if needed.
3. SHORT TERM: Amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow the further residential and mixed-use development of lots in existing town neighborhoods and in neighborhood centers, creating efficient land-use patterns that result in overall reductions in future traffic generation.



Rob Benchley

*The Community Plan recommends the consideration of legislative initiatives that promote the safety of moped use.*

### **Objective 5.10**

*To reduce automobile dependence by establishing a system of safe and convenient alternative transportation modes islandwide based on the coordination of schedules, routes, and connections (i.e., a "seamless" system).*

#### **Objective 5.10.1**

*To improve and expand the Nantucket Regional Transit Authority's shuttle system.*

*A. To provide the NRTA with the ability to fund expansions of the shuttle system.*

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Consider advocating a change in state law to allow removing, or otherwise modifying, the legislative restriction that limits annual increases in the NRTA's operating costs to 2½ percent.
2. SHORT TERM: Consider the feasibility of expanding the shuttle system to provide year-round service.

*B. To institute operational changes that increase efficiency and ridership.*

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Reduce shuttle headways (i.e., the times between consecutive buses) to add ridership capacity and induce greater participation in the shuttle program.
2. SHORT TERM: Reduce headways and the length of the Miacomet Loop by eliminating portions of the loop that overlap other routes. Reducing headways promotes a more efficient and convenient shuttle service to downtown.
3. SHORT TERM: Establish outlying shuttle centers and consolidate bus arrivals downtown to reduce their on-street impact.

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# Making It Happen: On-Island Travel

(continued)

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4. SHORT TERM: Study the viability of a system of feeder vans for the purpose of providing service to neighborhoods presently not served by the NRTA's shuttle.
5. SHORT TERM: Provide additional means for carrying bicycles on shuttles to increase bicycle-transport capacity.
6. SHORT TERM: Sponsor a design competition for Nantucket-based designers and architects to design shuttle centers and stops.
7. SHORT TERM: Upgrade heavily utilized shuttle stops to add shelter and illumination as appropriate, and in keeping with the HDC's design requirements and neighborhood and countryside character.

## C. To plan and implement route modifications or expansions that increase the system's effective service area and its efficiency.

### Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Provide a shuttle connection to the airport.
2. SHORT TERM: Expand the hours of operation for the NRTA's "beach buses" so that they also serve as general bus routes servicing businesses, especially lodging establishments, in and at the fringe of downtown.

## D. To increase the effectiveness of the shuttle system through strategic marketing.

### Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Urge the Chamber of Commerce to take a more aggressive role in promoting to its members and their employees the use of other modes of transportation as

alternatives to the automobile, especially the NRTA's seasonal shuttle system.

2. SHORT TERM: Consider a program to encourage downtown restaurants to persuade potential patrons, at the time reservations are made, to use taxis or the NRTA shuttle system.
3. SHORT TERM: Promote, expand, and more aggressively market NRTA's "Commuter Solution" program.
4. SHORT TERM: Establish a "Shuttle Club" to acknowledge businesses that participate in the NRTA's "Commuter Solution" program.
5. SHORT TERM: Promote the use of NRTA Park and Ride lots (existing commercial parking lots) for downtown access as an alternative for island residents and visitors who reside beyond walking distance to existing shuttle routes—and as an alternative to use of the Washington Street parking lot, which is over-utilized.



Mary Novissimo

*The Community Plan recommends expanding today's NRTA to further reduce the island's dependency on cars.*

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### Objective 5.10.2

*To increase the efficiency and level of service of the island's taxi services.*

#### Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Encourage taxi owners to establish and utilize co-op central dispatching to enhance the efficiency of taxi service; and encourage the start-up of private dispatching businesses or co-ops.
2. SHORT TERM: Encourage enhanced and coordinated taxi service at and to the airport, Steamboat Wharf, and Straight Wharf to provide adequate service at times of arrival and departure.
3. SHORT TERM: Encourage the taxi industry to provide more bike racks on taxis to promote intermodal connections.
4. SHORT TERM: Improve taxi service during off-peak periods to better serve the year-round population and to offer at least a minimum level of service to meet demand.

### Objective 5.10.3

*To improve and expand the island's bikepath system.*

#### A. To enhance the existing system of bikepaths.

#### Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Study the feasibility of, and implementing, bikepath "shortcuts" to give bicyclists an advantage in travel time over automobiles, while being sensitive to the impacts of increased accessibility to environmentally sensitive areas.
2. SHORT TERM: Add interconnections within the existing bicycle network to create loops, while considering impacts to environmentally sensitive areas.
3. SHORT TERM: Create interconnections between bikepaths and neighborhoods and between one neighborhood and another.
4. SHORT TERM: Amend the Zoning Bylaw and the Rules and Regulations Governing the

Subdivision of Land to strengthen the Planning and Zoning Boards' ability to require developers to create neighborhood bikepath connections.

5. SHORT TERM: Create an in-town bike route/bikepath that safely conveys pedestrians and bicyclists from the wharves to the Rotary.
6. SHORT TERM: Create a bike route/bikepath connector between downtown and the existing Cliff Road bikepath.
7. SHORT TERM: Create a bike route/bikepath between downtown and Jetties Beach.
8. SHORT TERM: More clearly delineate principal bicycle routes in a manner that appropriately considers design compatibility with the historic downtown.



Rob Benchley

*The Community Plan will encourage taxi owners to establish and utilize central dispatching to enhance the efficiency of taxi service.*

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# **M**aking It Happen: On-Island Travel (continued)

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## **B. To promote the expansion of bicycle usage.**

### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Provide more bike racks in town, at the beaches, and at the airport to encourage and facilitate bicycle use.
2. SHORT TERM: Urge bicycle rentals at the airport and consider a pilot program to test its marketability. Consider reductions in automobile rental capacity should bicycle rentals be determined to be feasible.
3. LONG TERM: Study the feasibility of establishing a system of free bicycle fleets and usage, similar to Amsterdam's "white bicycle" program.

## **C. To enforce the rules of the road and maintain bikepaths.**

### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Initially utilize community policing principles to encourage compliance with the rules of the road applicable to bicyclists and issue tickets for serious offenses.
2. SHORT TERM: Urge bicycle-rental businesses to improve their instructions to customers concerning the rules of the road.

Rob Benchley



*The Community Plan will encourage bicycle usage through the improvement and expansion of the bikepath system and other measures.*

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#### **Objective 5.10.4**

*To improve the island's pedestrian systems to make Nantucket's neighborhoods more walkable.*

##### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Expand pedestrian systems throughout existing neighborhoods to support the concept of neighborhoods and neighborhood centers—a concept based on creating walkable neighborhoods.
2. SHORT TERM: Establish an interconnected and continuous system of sidewalks and bikepaths throughout the mid-island area, particularly in the vicinity of the schools and the Stop & Shop (see Objective 5.12, pages 128-129).
3. SHORT TERM: Identify and implement a safe and convenient system of pedestrian "shortcuts" from neighborhoods to the schools and the Stop & Shop and in other areas of the island, as applicable, to encourage pedestrian usage and discourage use of the automobile, while being sensitive to the impacts of increased accessibility to environmentally sensitive areas.
4. SHORT TERM: Provide for continued maintenance of existing pedestrian systems in the downtown and mid-island areas to provide for public safety.
5. SHORT TERM: Implement an aggressive program to improve access for persons with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

#### **Objective 5.10.5**

*To encourage the use of vans or jitneys.*

##### **Recommendation:**

1. SHORT TERM: Encourage the island's lodging establishments to expand the use of vans as a means of reducing the need to use automobiles downtown. Preferably, this expansion should be in the form of an efficient, integrated jitney system that will operate in a continuous loop between the wharves, the airport, and lodging establishments.

#### **Objective 5.10.6**

*To enhance and enforce the regulations governing tour vehicles.*

##### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Strictly enforce the Town of Nantucket's regulations governing tour vehicles.
2. SHORT TERM: Encourage tour providers to utilize tour vans in lieu of tour buses.

#### **Objective 5.10.7**

*To encourage alternative modes of transportation through marketing efforts, and by creating islandwide incentives for their use (also see the NRTA marketing objectives in Objective 5.10.1 D, page 122).*

##### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Design a coordinated system of alternative transportation modes (sidewalks/walking paths, bikepaths, shuttles, etc.) to provide visitors, in advance of making reservations, a disincentive to bring their cars. Urge the private sector to include information on alternative modes of transportation as part of the package for seasonal rentals.



Rob Benchley

*The plan seeks to encourage more use of jitneys by hotels and guest houses.*

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# Making It Happen: On-Island Travel

(continued)

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2. SHORT TERM: Urge development of additional information systems to inform travelers on ferries, airplanes, taxis, the shuttle, and visitors at the Visitor Center and Chamber of Commerce of details concerning bike routes, shuttle routes, and any changes to those systems.
3. SHORT TERM: Amend the Zoning Bylaw to create incentives and rewards for the use of alternative modes of transport that have demonstrated a reduction in the use of the automobile. Such incentives may include relief from the provisions of the parking requirements of the Zoning Bylaw.

## Objective 5.10.8

*To provide funding incentives to support alternative transportation systems.*

### Recommendation:

1. SHORT TERM: Explore possible new funding sources to support the operating costs of the NRTA and other alternative transportation systems.

## Objective 5.11

*To manage traffic congestion downtown and increase safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.*

### Objective 5.11.1

*To manage deliveries downtown.*

#### Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Establish and enforce strict off-peak delivery times for delivery vehicles and provide additional "flex loading/parking zones" as an incentive, which zones will revert to exclusive parking zones during times of peak traffic.
2. SHORT TERM: Allow exceptions to the prohibition of delivery trucks downtown outside of designated times for downtown parcel pick-ups, provided dedicated loading zones are utilized at select locations. Hand trucks can be used to pick up packages from those central locations.
3. SHORT TERM: Enforce the bylaw regulating loading zones and tow zones.
4. SHORT TERM: Undertake the engineering work to establish weight limits for various roads downtown.
5. SHORT TERM: Consider implementation of the same or similar measures within the village of Siasconset.
6. LONG TERM: Study the legality and feasibility of limiting truck size.



Rob Benchley

*The Community Plan encourages improved information available to visitors on bike and shuttle routes and other transit options.*

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### **Objective 5.11.2**

*To manage pedestrian traffic.*

#### **Recommendation:**

1. SHORT TERM: Experiment with a temporary system of bollards and chains/rails, consistent with HDC guidelines, between the sidewalks and the roadways at lower Broad Street and at the corners of Main Street and Washington Street and South Water Street, in order to confine pedestrian traffic to sidewalks and direct them to designated crosswalks.

### **Objective 5.11.3**

*To manage the flow of traffic throughout the downtown area.*

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Hire additional Parking Enforcement and Traffic Control Officers to better manage pedestrian and auto traffic during peak arrival periods downtown, and elsewhere where congestion occurs, while seeking funding for these officers from public and private sources.
2. SHORT TERM: Evaluate the possible redirection of one-way downtown streets.

### **Objective 5.11.4**

*To manage parking and discourage the use of motor vehicles in downtown.*

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Discourage new motor vehicle parking spaces in the Core District except for the provision of parking for persons with disabilities.
2. SHORT TERM: Create new bicycle parking downtown to promote this alternative mode in lieu of the automobile.

Rob Benchley



*The Community Plan seeks to better manage pedestrian traffic and enforce laws designed to relieve congestion due to traffic.*

### **Objective 5.11.5**

*To evaluate, establish, and enforce truck routes.*

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Create and distribute truck-route maps for downtown Nantucket to all truck drivers when they board in Hyannis.
2. SHORT TERM: Reevaluate existing truck routes and establish revised routes, if warranted.

### **Objective 5.11.6**

*To coordinate Steamship Authority and private passenger carrier arrivals and departures with land-side transportation.*

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Renew talks with the Steamship Authority toward the creation of a mutual strategy to ameliorate congestion at the Steamship Authority and lower Broad Street.
2. SHORT TERM: Study all ferry wharves and adjoining streets to see how they can more efficiently handle visitor arrivals and departures, coordinated with land-side services.

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# Making It Happen: On-Island Travel

(continued)

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## Objective 5.11.7

*To enforce laws designed to relieve congestion.*

### Recommendation:

1. SHORT TERM: Provide the necessary technology

to tie into a central database to better police and manage parking in the historic downtown. Consider the legality and feasibility of a system of escalating fines to discourage repeat offenders. Seek enabling legislation, if needed.



## Objective 5.12

*To reduce traffic congestion in the vicinity of Nantucket's schools through improvements to the pedestrian, bikepath, and school-bus systems, and through marketing of alternatives to automobiles.*

### Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Create a complete system of sidewalk and bikepath connections around the schools (½-to-1 mile radius) to facilitate safe travel by foot, and reduce the number of student drop-offs by automobile.
2. SHORT TERM: Study the feasibility of implementing additional traffic-calming measures along the schools' frontages on Surfside Road and Sparks Avenue in order to reduce the speed of traffic and increase safety for pedestrians.
3. SHORT TERM: Reevaluate the recommendations of the Traffic Management Strategy Report prepared for the NP&EDC by Sam Park & Associates (June 1996) in the context of Neighborhood Area Plans.
4. SHORT TERM: Encourage the School Committee to reduce auto-dependency and congestion at the schools by means of the following measures:

Tuesday, September 28, 1999, 3:15 P.M. Even off-season, unacceptable traffic levels near the schools are a daily occurrence.

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),

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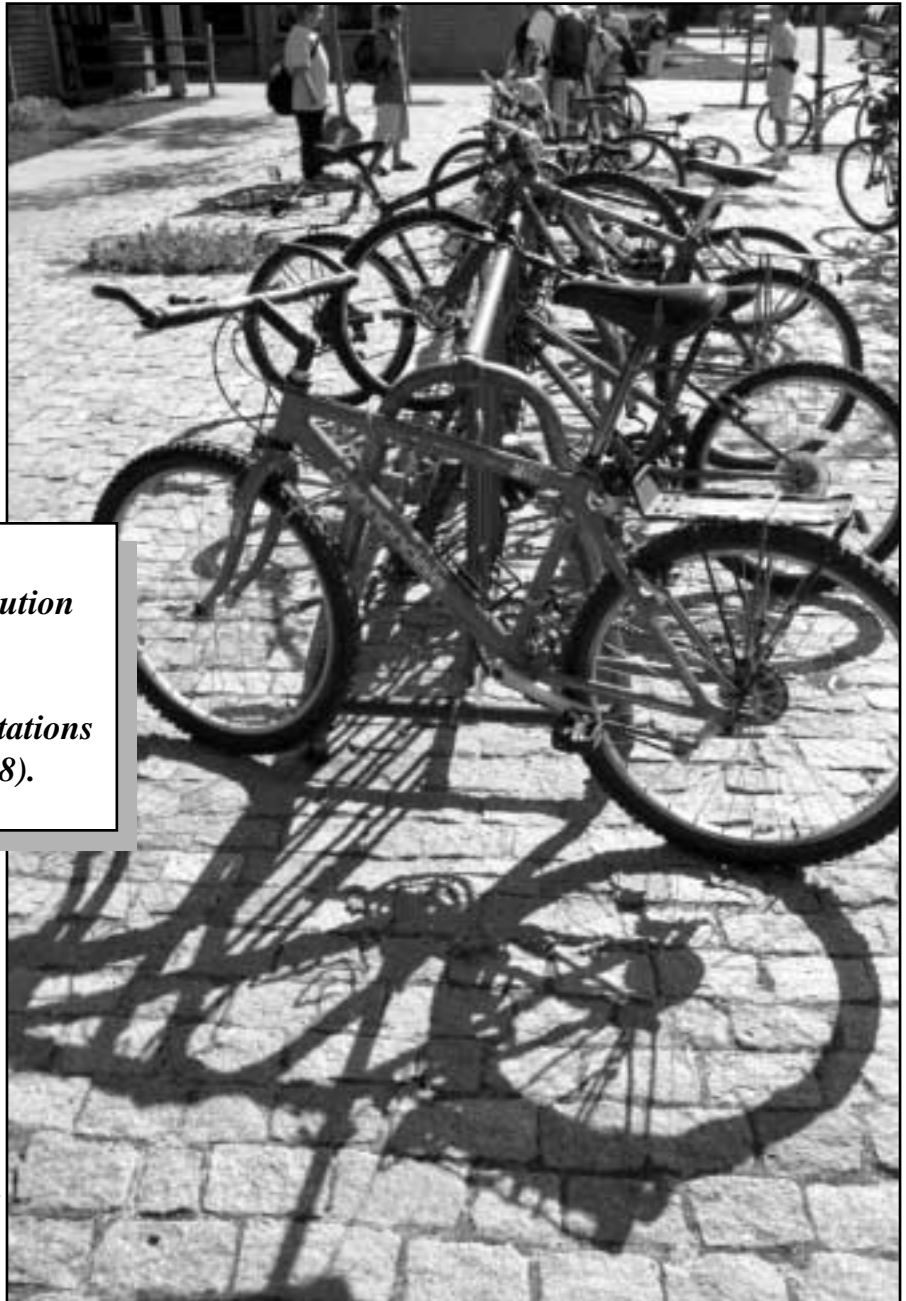
Rob Benchley



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- a. Review school-bus policies for ways to increase ridership.
- b. Engage in a process to develop and implement a "Safe Routes to Schools" program on Nantucket to heighten the safety of walking and bicycling to school, and thus reduce auto-dependency and congestion.
- c. Promote use of carpooling by parents driving students to school and by students driving themselves to school, and establish a ride-matching service for parents and students.
- d. Promote use of the school-bus system as an alternative to use of the automobile.

freight from trucks to containers and of establishing a freight link between the harbor and a freight-distribution center near the airport, or elsewhere on the island. Seek enabling legislation, if needed.



### **Objective 5.13**

***To provide for the efficient distribution of goods on-island in a manner consistent with appropriate infrastructure capacities and limitations (See Objective 5.11, pages 126-128).***

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SHORT TERM: Study the feasibility of a coordinated freight-delivery program in consultation with merchants and freight-transport companies.
2. SHORT TERM: Consider the legality and feasibility of a Nantucket freight-licensing system. Seek enabling legislation, if needed.
3. SHORT TERM: Study the legality and feasibility of transferring

Rob Benchley

*One way to reduce traffic in the vicinity of the schools is to improve bikepath access so more children are encouraged to ride their bikes to school.*

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),

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